

SWEET CHRISTMAS TIME.

Oh Christmas chimes! O Christmas times!
The sweetest and the brightest;
When hearts beat high and pulses fly,
And childhood's steps are lightest,
When ruddy cheeks are ruddiest,
And red lips like a cherry.
O Christmas near! O Christmas here!
So sparkling and so merry!

Old Santa Claus—with ample cause,
For children all adore him—
While they're asleep, takes many a peep
At trundle-beds before him;
And then he launches—not in his sleeve,
For that is full, believe it,
Of Christmas toys, for girls and boys,
And could not well receive it.

The good old man will plot and plan
Like any great commander,
Or swim deep seas—the young to please—
As did the brave Leander.
Not only packs of jumping-jacks
Adorn his ample shoulders,
But hats and boots and stylish suits
Astonish all beholders.

O Christmas bells, your music tells
A tale of joy and gladness—
Of tireless peace, of sweet increase—
And not a tale of sadness;
For even Poverty lifts up
Her thousand, thousand voices,
And for this time, this one bright time
Of goody cheer, rejoices!

—Mrs. M. A. Kidder.

SMALL PERTATERS' CHRISTMAS PARTY.

By MARGARET EYTINGE.

It was about nine o'clock on Christmas Eve. Small Pertaters was standing on one leg, with the other twisted around it, looking into one of the windows of Purcell's large bakery. He could smell the mince pies, that, fresh from the oven a short time before, had just been placed in it.

"They smells bully good," he said, giving a great sniff. "I wished I had one."

But he might as well, poor little fellow, have wished for the moon (he would have stood as good a chance of getting it), for not one cent was there, either in the ragged pockets of his ragged trousers, or the ragged pockets of his ragged coat. (This coat had once been the spring overcoat of some one twice as big as Small Pertaters, and it was worn to a fringe all around the bottom from trailing on the ground.)

"I'd rather," said Small Pertaters, "have one of them nor any thin' else. They's meat an' vegetables an' caudy an' cake all to wunst, they is. An' how brown their kivers is. I never seen sich werry brown kivers on a pie afore."

At this moment a gentleman and a lovely fair-haired little girl, followed by a small white dog, went into the shop, stayed there a short time, and coming out again, hastened up the avenue. Small Pertaters gazed after them.

"Her hair was just like shiny gold," he said. "S'pect she has mince pie every day of her life. But it's no use me standin' here. It makes me hunger an' hunger lookin' at them pies. I'll go home an' eat my supper; an' ain't every boy what's got a soup-bone, with a lot of marrer in it an' a hunk of gristle an' meat a-hangin' to it, an' a fresh biscuit, an' a cole biled pertater, in his coat tail pocket."

And, turning quickly from the window, he spied the small white dog which had been following the gentleman and the golden haired child sniffing at the same coat-tail pocket.

"Jimmy Jinks!" said Small Pertaters; "if that hog of a dog ain't a-tryin' to hook my bone. An' I s'pect he has more soup bones nor what he knows what to do with where he lives, for he's a nobby dog, he is. Git out, you swell pup."

And the "swell pup," starting to get out, discovered that he had lost his master and mistress, and ran to and fro, with nose to the snow-covered pavement, eagerly seeking a trail of them, for five or ten minutes. Then, giving up in despair, he seated himself before the boy, who stood watching him, and shaking his muddy little paws, looked up into his face in the most beseeching manner.

"It's too bad," said Small Pertaters, patting his head with a very dirty hand. "Guess they must have got on to a car, ole feller; an' the best thing you kin do is to come home with me, an' we'll look for 'em to-morrer."



"THEY SMELLS BULLY GOOD," HE SAID.

And, as though he understood his new friend perfectly, the dog trotted after him as he went a few blocks down the avenue, and turned, first into Thirteenth street, and then into Gansvoort street. Here the boy strode quickly along, whistling cheerily, his hands in what was left of his trousers pockets, until he stumbled over something that was lying on the sidewalk. Stooping to see what it was, he found a brown hen, with her legs sticking up straight and stiff.

"It's got shut out of its lojins!" said he, "an' it's froze. Bat p'r'ps ain't a hull goner. I'll git it loose an' take it home with me, anyhow."

So he searched about until he found a stone, with which he broke the ice around the hen, and, setting it free, with the loss of a few feathers, he

went on again, carrying it with him, the dog still following. But he had only gone a block farther, when he heard a pitiful mew come from an ash-barrel that stood before a tenement house, and, peeping in, he saw a black and white kitten sitting on the ashes.

"Pears to me I'm bound to have a party ter-night," said Small Pertaters. "Here's another young friend a-waitin' to come home with me. All right, pussy; here goes." And he lifted her out of the barrel, and stowed her away inside of his big coat. "There's nothin' mean 'bout me, 'specially roun' Christmas times."

And in another minute or two he and his three guests had arrived at the end of the street, and the end of their journey. They had reached Small Pertaters' home—"sweet, sweet home," indeed, in one sense of the word; for what do you think it was? An old molasses cask lying upon its side on the wharf, near the river. Getting down on his hands and knees, Small Pertaters, by the aid of a street lamp that stood near by, took a survey of the inside of the cask, and finding no intruder there, crawled in, laid down the hen and kitten, and then went back for the dog, who lingered at the entrance.

"Come in, ole feller," said he coaxingly.

But the dog suddenly turned tail,



"MERRY CHRISTMAS, SMALL PERTATERS."

and was making off, when Small Pertaters sprung out and flourished the bone before his nose. The temptation was too much. Master Dog joined the party in the molasses cask; and, when the supper was served, Small Pertaters gave him the larger part of the meat and gristle, and, spreading the marrow as well as he could—for it was hard and cold—on the biscuit, he fed half of it to the kitten, keeping the other half and the cold potato for himself. As for the hen, she lay on her back as stiff as ever.

"Guess she must be froze all through," said Small Pertaters; and then, with a sigh, he murmured: "I ain't so werry full as I might be. Wished—I—had—one—of—them—mince—" and fell fast asleep, the cat and dog snuggled up, one each side of him.

Bright and early Christmas morning a gentleman and a lovely little girl called upon the owner of the bakery into the window of which Small Pertaters had been looking the night before.

"Did you see anything of a little white dog, after we left your shop last night?" they both asked, in the same breath.

"No; I did not, I am sorry to say," was the answer.

The tears started to the child's eyes.

"Don't cry, dear," said her papa. "We haven't half looked for him yet. We'll find the policeman who was no this beat at the time we lost him, and very likely he can tell us something about him. If he can't, I'll advertise in all the papers to-morrow."

But, unfortunately, the policeman, whom they soon found, remembered seeing a small white dog trotting after a boy, between 9 and 10 o'clock the night before.

"The boy was Small Pertaters," he said, "and that's the reason I didn't ask anything about the dog. He's an honest, good-hearted little chap, though he is a reg'lar street-boy, with no friends except such as he makes in the street. They call him 'Small Pertaters' 'cause he's no bigger than a boy of 6 or 7, though he must be 9 or 10. But, small as he is, he can beat and boy I ever saw at climbing and jumping. And, as I was saying, when I saw the dog with him I didn't give it a second thought."

"Where does he live?" asked the child, eagerly.

"Most anywhere, I guess, Miss," answered the policeman. "He ain't got any reg'lar home."

"And you can't tell us where to find him?" said the gentleman. "My little girl's Christmas won't be a very merry one unless she gets some tidings of her pet."

"Well, sir, you might make a try for it. Go along the north side of Gansvoort street till you come to the river; Small Pertaters has a sleeping place somewhere in that neighborhood, and maybe you'll meet him coming over to the avenue a looking for his breakfast."

So, leaving many thanks and a silver dollar for the officer's baby son behind them, the child and her father started off again, and, reaching Gansvoort street, turned into it, walking slowly along and watching both sides of the way, when, just as they arrived at the last corner, they met another policeman.

"Small Pertaters?" said he, in answer to a question of Mr. Mitchell's (that was the name of the little girl's father). "I guess you'll find him at home."

"And is his home near?" asked Dolly (that was the name of the little girl herself).

"Right over there," replied the policeman. But, as there was no house where he pointed, the gentleman began to laugh. "Do you see that molasses cask?" said he. "Well, that's Small Pertaters' home."

"What a queer home!" said Dolly; and, running across the street, she stooped and looked into the cask. There lay the poor boy, a piece of carpet wrapped around him, fast asleep. On his breast sat the kitten watching her face, and from his side, with a joyful bark, bounded a little white dog to greet his beloved mistress. The bark awoke the sleeping boy. He rubbed his eyes with his knuckles, opened them, saw a lovely face looking in at him, heard a sweet voice call "Merry Christmas, Small Pertaters," and scrambled, winking and blinking, out into the sunlight.

"Jimmy Jinks! if I didn't think you was one of them Christmas angels, fast," he said, with a curious mixture of shyness and boldness. "Then I 'membered 'twas you I seen last night comin' out of a mince pie—I mean a baker shop. An' I foun' your little dorg, an' I picked up a kitten an' a froze chickin. Jimmy Jenks! if she ain't melted," he exclaimed, as the hen came slowly walking out of the cask. "An' I went halves with my supper an' had a regular Christmas party."

"I'm over so much obliged to you,"

said Dolly; "and we'd like to have you come to our house and have a Christmas dinner. Wouldn't we, papa?" she added, turning to her father, who now stood beside her.

"Indeed we would," replied the father.

"I don't look good enough," stammered Small Pertaters, glancing at his ragged clothes.

"But you are good enough, all the same," said Dolly. "Any boy that'll take home a lost dog and cat and chicken, when his home's nothing but a big barrel, and give them their supper, when he don't know where he'll get his breakfast next morning, is good enough to go anywhere. And you can bring your company with you."

And off they all started—the little girl carrying the chicken in her arms, the dog running gayly by her side, Small Pertaters following with the



struggling hen hugged close to his breast. And after they reached the gentleman's house it wasn't long before the unexpected visitor had had a warm bath and a warm breakfast, and only a little longer before he found himself dressed in new clothes from head to foot.

And the next day a bright-faced, neat-looking lad tacked a paper, on which was printed the words "To Let," on the big molasses cask that lay on the wharf, and then, stepping backward a few steps, he made a flying leap over it, and ran away from his old street life forever.

Leather Unlucky at Christmas.

Christmas being the period in which gifts are numerous it seems rather curious that it should be thought unlucky to bring shoes or leather articles into the house at this period, but such things are forbidden in an English county. In another it is counted unlucky to bring any holly into the house before Christmas Eve, and in London it must all be burned on Twelfth Day morning.

HOW NEW YORK SHOPS.

\$20,000,000 Pass Over the Great City's Counters For Holiday Things.

Some person with a love for large figures has said that in Christmas week \$20,000,000 is handed over counters of this city as tribute to Santa Claus, says a New York correspondent. That sum may sound suspiciously great, and the statistician might be charged with the evil of exaggeration, but when it is remembered that gifts for 3,000,000 of people are purchased here \$20,000,000 do not seem too large for the total. An average of a trifle over \$6 per person is large, or small, according to the financial rank of the reader, and in New York it is particularly difficult to strike a fair average, because of the extremes of poverty and wealth.

The Fifth avenue millionaire gives his wife a \$30,000 diamond necklace, while the father of the east side brings joy to the heart of the child of the tenements with a gaudily painted ten-cent toy. One Christmas, a half a dozen years ago, William K. Vanderbilt gave his wife, now Mrs. Belmont, a pearl necklace that cost him \$1,500,000 to gather the fifteen feet of stringed pearls together. That same Christmas more than one child found delight in

a goodly section of Brooklyn, a large part of Jersey and a big portion of all the suburban towns within fifty miles of New York do their shopping.



Biggest Sweet Potato Grown.

A Kansas farmer, John Graham, of Abilene, has grown a sweet potato which he says is the largest in the world. It is twenty-five inches in circumference and nine inches in length. It weighs nine and three-quarters pounds.

Wedding Threads.

In certain parts of China the young women wear their hair in a long, single plait, with which is intertwined a strand of bright scarlet thread, which denotes them to be marriageable.



HOW NEW YORK SPENDS ITS MILLIONS FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS.

a nickel toy. Christmas back John D. Rockefeller sent a check for \$100,000 to the Fifty-seventh Street Baptist church as a holiday offering, and the same day the organ grinder of Mulberry Bend dropped a couple of coppers in the plate of the Italian church in Roosevelt street.

So much for the extremes of Christmas giving in New York.

Fully one-half of the Christmas shopping is done the day and the night before Christmas; not one-half financially, but numerically. The moderately poor, the poor and the very poor must wait until the very last minute to get their small funds together for the great event. The money gift of the employer to the bread winner of the family is made the day before Christmas, and often times the extent of that gift determines the scope of the Christmas shopping for the family. Again if Christmas comes near the end of the week, as it does this year, many will get their week's pay on Thursday night.

Another potent reason for delaying the shopping to the last minute is that things are cheaper on Christmas Eve than earlier in the week. Toys and games and clothing have suffered from the rough handling, there are rips and tears which, however, can be easily sewed up; paint has been scraped off, parts of games lost and numerous other mishaps have occurred, all of which induces the shop owner to make a material reduction in his prices. Again, he does not want to carry a single piece of his Christmas stock over for a year, as he loses the use of the money. So he is eager to mark things down to the real cost, or a trifle below, if needs be, to get rid of them.

People who have to watch the pennies are quick to recognize these advantages. So Christmas Eve is the great shopping time for the lower part of town and the East side. Vesey street is the Christmas Eve stamping ground of the old First and Fourth Warders. The people for the most part of this district esteem themselves lucky if they can spend \$2, and as this sum has to supply the Christmas dinner, as well as to bring Santa Claus to an abnormally large family of children, sharp bargaining must be done.

Push carts line the streets from Broadway to the North River, and al-

roll of ribbon under their wraps, were it not for the hordes of detectives which fill the stores of Grand street, buy to the limit of their purses, but buy sharply.

"I am going to buy a bennie for Jimmie," says one to her friend.

"Say, mister," to the floor walker, "where do I buy der bennie?"

"Hey?"

"Der bennie? What floor is youse selling them on?"

"The bennie?"

"Yes, yer hungry-looking guy, der bennie. Don't yer spouse I see got de price? I want to buy a bennie like dis." Here she caught hold of a man wearing a blue overcoat and held the coat for the others inspection.

"Oh, a coat—on the fifth floor, front."

"What d'ye tink of dat? Do gny didn't know what a bennie was. He must be new on Grand street." Then they take the elevator and she tells

WERE BORN IN 1815.

Ladies Who Claim to Be the Oldest Living Twins in the Country.

The claim of the Newell brothers, of Missouri, that they are the oldest pair of twins in the country, will not hold, according to a correspondent of the Chicago Times-Herald. Mrs. H. H. Johnson, recently of Kankakee, Ill., and now of Omaha, Neb., and Mrs. David Noggle, of Janesville, Wis., are one month older. These ladies are the twin children—Polly M. and Anna M.—of Benjamin and Eunice Mosher Lewis, and were born at Bristol, N. Y., May 29, 1815. They were the youngest of fifteen children. The twins went to Milan, Ohio, when about seventeen, married there, and in 1837, Mrs. Noggle came to Wisconsin to live the life of a pioneer. Mrs. Noggle is a woman of native ability and can tell many interesting tales of early life in Wisconsin. She is the mother of



OLDEST LIVING TWINS.

the man to let her off "where dere sellin' de bennies."

Fourteenth street and Sixth avenue is where the biggest part of the city,

seven children. The sisters are both in full possession of their faculties and are as active as women of sixty-five.